

# THE PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL



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## **NEWSPAPERS AND ECONOMIC ILLITERACY**

By JAMES P. SELVAGE

## **OBSERVATIONS ON QUANTITY AND QUALITY**

By I. D. ROBBINS

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## THE PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

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# PR JOURNAL

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APRIL, 1949

## Newspapers and Economic Illiteracy

By JAMES P. SELVAGE

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THE GENERAL TOPIC of our discussion is Public Relations and the Financial Pages.

This is a broad question subject to many interpretations. We might spend a happy and exciting evening tossing dead cats at each other under the aegis of such a topic. I have no doubt you can recite many instances where men bearing the self-chosen epaulets of public relations have sought to misuse your pages. I conceivably might be able to retaliate with a story or two of having faced irate corporation presidents to explain why a wrong conclusion was drawn from a release or why I did not control your headline.

It could be a rollicking evening of

fun. But, with your permission, I choose to delimit my part of the discussion tonight to something more basic and vital than the purely occupational relationships between public relations and the gentlemen of the press as represented by the financial and business editors.

My broad premise is —

There is no way through the daily press of the nation to get across to the great, unknowing masses the simple verities of our industrial system — the answers to the politicians, to the radicals, to the radical politico-labor leaders who, either through ignorance or deliberate distortion, seek the Glory Road through economic confusion.

The immediate response to that broad statement might be threefold:

- 1) No institution believes more firmly in the capitalistic system than the newspapers as a group.
- 2) The newspapers carry, proportionately, each day more news about business and industry than any other subject, except, perhaps, sports.
- 3) Business does not package its news and tie it up with pink ribbon so it will be attractive.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here's an article dealing with a subject of major import to public relations people. In it, Mr. Selvage succinctly states the problem, discusses its impact upon business, industry, economic understanding, and offers sound proposals to meet the need revealed. "Newspapers and Economic Illiteracy" was presented by Mr. Selvage on March 1, 1949 to the New York Financial Writers' Association. It should be brought to the attention of publishers and financial and business writers throughout America.

I agree. But, whatever the reason, it does not deny the fact that almost invariably, whatever business has to say appears on the financial and business pages.

### The Nerve Center

What are the financial pages? They comprise the most selectly edited parts of the newspaper. They are written for a very compact business-financial audience. A single sentence wrongly written, or with a few misplaced facts, might do incalculable economic damage to a great many people. I think it is not too broad a statement that commerce in America would dry up more quickly than we can imagine without the financial and business pages as the nerve center tying varying interests together.

Yet, there are millions who turn to the sports pages, to the comics, to the women's pages — sometimes stop even to read the rape story on the front page — who think that the financial pages are not for her or him.

And I think we can accept the sequitur that the less this guy is likely to read the financial pages, the more economically illiterate he is, the more he is a prey for any demagogue who portrays a businessman as a fathead with a big bay window, a top hat, and a consuming desire to starve widows and children, break unions, and establish Fascism in America.

Publication Research Service reports on its surveys of Sunday newspaper readership that, among men, 71 per cent read the rotogravure, 51 per cent the main news section, 66 per cent the sports and 21 per cent the financial pages. Among women, 76 per cent read the gravure, 57 per cent the main news, 65 per cent the society section and 7 per cent the financial.

So what happens almost daily?

Mr. Truman tells the world that the

steel industry is falling down on its job and that the government should become a steel producer. It is eight column headline news. The steel industry makes its reply, similarly economic in its phrasing and implications, but it lands on the financial pages.

You know, and no doubt some of you have told your public, that many of the people who are now demanding industrial expansion were expounding the thesis fifteen and eighteen years ago that it was over-expansion industrially that caused the depression; that we were a mature economy; that we needed a 30-hour week, and other panaceas. Today they have completely contradicted themselves.

But the millions to whom Mr. Truman addressed himself remain just as economically dumb as at the time they finished reading the President's messages.

Let's take a couple of more examples.

The NAM works for weeks on a statement from its Board, its President, or some committee, with the idea that it might register with the public its concept of the sound economic approach to some current problem. They argue over words and sentences to insure that they are simple enough for the man on the street. They labor over semantics. They might even call in some great brains from my profession.

### It Happens Again

Finally, the baby is born, a release date is set, and the committee looks hopefully through the papers. They find their Holy Writ on the financial pages and know that once again their membership constituency will advise them, "You are talking only to yourselves."

I suppose Alfred P. Sloan comes as near being the industrial leader of America as any other single man. A few times a year he delivers a speech. We know the thought, time and effort that

has gone into the preparation of the address which, he hopes, is addressed to the people — not just to his friends. To the financial pages it goes.

Yet Philip Murray can take the same economic springboard and jump backward from the other end, spraying dubious facts and figures, and he hits the front page or the general news section.

### **They Make the Front Page**

You will recall that famous document sprung, full-blown from the statistical tables of Henry Wallace, Robert Nathan and the CIO, predicting 8,000,000 unemployed within a year after the end of the war. It was equal in news value to a good triangle divorce involving a model and a banker. But if the Chamber of Commerce on the preceding day had forecast full employment for three years following the war it would, most likely, have arrived on the financial and business pages.

Here is one more example slightly closer to us. On February 8 another of those great minds in Washington, Leon Keyserling, hit the front pages with a perfectly political economic forecast before a Senate Committee that if Truman's program is not enacted we face an \$800 billion depression.

Patently, there are a lot of answers to that. You might just say Keyserling was talking nonsense to scare Congress. You might say he was stupidly talking us into a depression. You might even be nasty enough to suggest that the same people helped Keyserling who dreamed up that 8,000,000 unemployed, — and for similar propaganda reasons, namely to frighten the nation into government controls.

I think most of you have answered Keyserling. But how many people saw these analyses compared with those who read Keyserling?

Let's take a quick peep at a couple of

more examples. Attorney General Clark has made two speeches recently charging industry with trying to create a depression. Mr. Emil Rieve, president of the CIO Textile Workers Union, announces that national employment is worse than government statistics show — and, of course, wants government action. A purely political approach with no indication of where Mr. Rieve gets statistics that are better than those of the government.

About the same time two other statements emanated. In one, Mr. Lewis Brown of Johns-Manville also spoke on the danger of depression. I think Mr. Average Reader might accept him as at least comparable to Mr. Rieve as an authority. The NAM issued a statement labeling as a "hoax" the assertion that industry makes a 15 per cent return on its investment, obviously addressing itself to the public for the information was inconsequential to the financial public. Mr. Brown and NAM hit the financial pages; Mr. Clark and Mr. Rieve the general news sections under nice headlines.

Don't misunderstand that I am criticizing financial pages. As I have said, I think they are the nerve center of commerce. I remember when I was sports editor down in Richmond, I used to bawl loud and long when they took even the World's Series off of my pages for the front.

### **The Newspapers Teach**

But all of that is incidental. The question I am posing is how we cure our people of economic illiteracy — how do you help? How do we stop them from believing what every self-seeking politician tells them? The newspapers, the free press of America, have been our greatest institution of learning. A man who never goes to a baseball game can continue to know every quirk of the

game and every rule change through interpretative columns. You can learn to play golf through instructional columns. The newspapers teach you how to wash the baby, take care of your health, not to eat peas with a knife, and even advise on your love life. Winchell will tell you when you are going to become a father and if the time is ripe for buying stocks.

### It's All One

Today, economics and an understanding of business, industry and commerce are intertwined with our existence as a free people.

And if the newspapers don't assume the burden of economic enlightenment, who will? Obviously, we are not reaching the masses. Proof? The common knowledge that millions of our people will vote for any governmental expenditure without even thinking that they are paying for it.

Now I have been thoroughly and completely negative. I can't suggest to you that I know all of the answers. I am not contending that business and industry itself has not failed lamentably to translate itself even to those who should be staunch allies, the employees.

Neither am I contending that the newspapers should become a mouthpiece for business and industry, instead of being an objective critic and teacher, whatever the issue. They should not accept a thesis that business can do no wrong.

I do contend that the press, inadvertently through departmentalized traditions, has given those who attack the capitalistic system and industry access to the public mind that is largely denied proponents of the system.

May we assume some premises leading to a conclusion:

- 1) The newspapers as a whole believe in the capitalistic system. They carry

the torch for it, but not in the right places.

- 2) You gentlemen probably know more about the system in an objective way than any other group for you are immersed in its vitals every day.
- 3) As a result you are more intelligently articulate on the subject.
- 4) There are, as a rule, just two places where your stories hit — the financial pages, or occasionally page one. There is no intermediate point. I would hazard the guess that few times in a year does a financial writer find his stuff on pages, 2, 6 or 12.

To these I would add one more general premise. There is no lack of belief on the part of publishers that people are increasingly interested in financial and economic matters. A survey of the front pages would show that story after story is devoted to matters that 15 years ago would have been considered Chinese to the average front page reader. Also, about half the columns emanating from Washington are no different from those you write, using subject matter as a yardstick. But, often these are authored by men skillful at interpreting political and governmental affairs but whom you would completely befuddle in an intensive discussion of finance — the Bank for International Settlements, for instance.

### Who's Your Audience?

The only conclusion with which I am left, having built this rationalized argument, is that you gentlemen have been departmentalized away from your natural, modern-day audience.

In other words, the audience of people interested in economic affairs is no longer your compact business-finance group. It is America.

Business, finance, economics is everybody's business. Your garage mechanic

or housewife is debating the subject over the monkey-wrench or the tea cup. Politics has become a cost of operations for any commercial establishment. It is woven into our daily lives. And you, the group presumably trained through study and experience to interpret finance, profit, depression dangers in terms that people can understand, are carefully shielded from your audience, as shown by readership surveys.

If a politician or a labor leader talks economics, you probably do not cover the story, although it may be pure business. It appears on page one or in the general news pages, and your whole readership has a shot at it. It may tear the guts out of industry, it may be so wrong that you ooze outrage. Perhaps you are so disturbed that you write a terrific piece the next day analyzing its fallacies — for me and my clients to read and applaud.

It is an ironic fact, however, that just as Mr. Sloan, the CED, NAM or John Hanes of the Tax Foundation endeavor to write for public consumption, most of your columns are so written that the average reader can comprehend. You, too, assume you are talking to him and not to Kuhn, Loeb.

### Field Is Broad

What do I propose?

I went to Paul Garrett of General Motors, one of your former colleagues, for consultation as to whether I dared put my neck out as far as I have tonight in a sacred field. Maybe Paul won't appreciate my laying his neck on the same chopping block. But he summed up my conclusion, saying:

"Today the financial writer's field is broader than the stock and investment market. He should be a commentator and an analyst with the entire economy for his field and as such he deserves a better platform than the financial page."

Carrying through that summation, I suggest for consideration by newspaper management —

- 1) That the financial and business interpretive columns be addressed to the public and printed regularly on Page 2 or 3.
- 2) That there be a closer liaison between news desks and financial desks and that the financial editor be allocated at least one column of space a day scattered through the general news section, exclusive of his own column to put in news stories which he deems most constructive — whether it be Mr. Sloan's speech, the NAM statement which I have used as my guinea pig tonight, or a human interest story dealing with some phase of commerce.

### Write Two Columns

I contend that your general readers are entitled to regular exposures to what industry is doing and saying just as much as to what the CIO is doing, without being scared to death by seeing a lot of statistics right alongside of the things in which he might be interested.

This can be done without hurting your financial page readership. Maybe it would not even hurt some of your regular patrons if they have to turn through the comics or the sports pages to find what they want to know; to find your column. Maybe you would write two columns a day — one for finance and one for general readership.

This is no radical suggestion. I am merely proposing a changed and more modern perspective toward industrial news. I know of no single — and simple — act that could do more to curb economic illiteracy. It would be worth millions poured into pamphleteering by various business organizations,



# OBSERVATIONS ON QUANTITY AND QUALITY IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

By I. D. ROBBINS

Partner, Robbins and Barber, Public Relations Counsel

ONE OF THE unfortunate aspects of the modern practice of public relations is that there has been inadequate criticism of the field. Public relations has been accepted as representing a method or procedure to be used by business and others without any evaluation as to whether the specific way it is used is good, bad, or indifferent. Furthermore, despite the many efforts to define public relations, the definitions have a tendency to break down in practice. With many different and varying concepts of the field, it is not always clear what one is talking about when public relations is discussed. While the field of public relations is usually explained in terms of general efforts to build goodwill, an examination of the practice indicates that it is essentially the use of propaganda for the purpose of achieving either general or specific objectives.

Furthermore, the lack of a body of criticism in the public relations field has tended to emphasize the quantitative aspects — the amount of publicity, etc., rather than the qualitative aspects. An

article by Richardson Wood published in the *Harvard Business Review* in the autumn of 1942 emphasized the political nature of high level business and public relations judgments. If we accept Mr. Wood's general thesis — and the writer believes that most students of business do accept it — we will see that there must be new emphasis on the internal merit of public relations efforts rather than upon their size and scope.

The most talked about form of public relations is general goodwill building. This form obviously interests the very largest companies. Large corporations have very complex relationships with all kinds of groups: in the community where their plants are located, with suppliers, dealers, labor, the general public, etc. They must create a general impression of themselves as economically sound and socially desirable. They must have a well presented general story to tell about themselves, and their public relations objectives are general rather than specific, even though the general impression may result from a series of specific public relations activities.

In this regard, it is worth examining the report of the National Industrial Conference Board, *Telling the Public* (October 1948), which indicates that public relations on the level of general goodwill building is still primarily an activity of only the largest corporations. The report points out, for example, "One out of every two corporations with sales of \$100 million dollars and more has an established public relations department. When sales fall below this level only one

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in six corporations has such a department. Instead the tendency is for public relations to become a part of another department, being handled most frequently in conjunction with advertising. No instance has been reported of a separate public relations department for companies with sales below a million dollars. The report also states that the present trend in public relations activity is toward customer relations, reflecting, no doubt, the feeling that public relations must play a large role in the company's selling program."

### Propaganda Techniques

As opposed to the relatively abstract concept of goodwill building, active practitioners of public relations know that most of the activity in the field is simply the use of various propaganda techniques to achieve specific objectives. Thus public relations in the form of publicity is frequently used for promotion of products; in the form of speeches for the purpose of underlining company economic policy, vis-a-vis competitors, the government, etc. Or, public relations is used in labor relations for the purpose of winning employee support for specific company policies or for winning public support in connection with labor disputes, new contracts, etc.

The difference between public relations as a general goodwill building technique and public relations as the practical application of propaganda for self-serving purposes with respect to specific objectives has undoubtedly led to much confusion and occasional dissatisfaction with the field. Because public relations has been publicized as a way of smoothing out intergroup frictions and of adjusting companies more effectively to their environment, many businessmen think of the field as a luxury designed only for those who can afford frills. Or, many corporate executives feel they are

quite competent to handle public relations as a part of their general executive responsibilities. Or, unfortunately, the failure to think of public relations as possessing well developed techniques for achieving specific objectives, through communicating ideas to people, leaves businessmen dangling with uncertainty in situations where specialized knowledge of communication could help them solve specific problems. Finally, the manner in which the field of public relations has been projected suggests that the very practice of public relations itself (as if it were an exact science) contains the final answer to business problems. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

It seems from much of the material written in the field that public relations has been considered almost entirely in quantitative terms. It is recognized that there is no battle between quantity and quality, that they are often interrelated and merge into each other. Volume of publicity, for example, almost irrespective of what the publicity says, has a way of profoundly impressing the importance of the subject on the public. It is from this that the statement, "Say anything you want about me, but be sure to spell my name right," derives.

### Quality Counts

However, some of the greatest disappointments in the use of public relations derive from too great concentration on quantity and an inadequate appreciation of quality. It is not only how often an idea is expressed, but how well that counts.

Businessmen must see public relations as a subjective field. The success of programs is dependent not only on the quantity of effort that is made in the name of public relations but also in the quality of that effort. Is the policy to be followed a sound one? Has it been con-

sidered in relation not only to the self-interest of the company but also to the reaction of competitors or of government or of labor? If the policy is to be carried out by means of advertising, is the advertising well written and well presented? If it is done with speeches, are the ideas contained in those speeches valid in the opinion of those who are listening? Or, are they so obviously self-serving and inconsiderate of the point of view of others as to be unpersuasive or even damaging? Those who would use public relations must remember that we live in a free society in which there is a vast interchange of ideas and arguments, that they go to the market place with their ideas in competition with others who likewise believe they have the answer.

Many unhappy experiences with public relations arise from the fact that despite tremendous effort and exceptional results in terms of the amount of publicity obtained the objectives are not reached. It is perfectly reasonable to have doubts about any ideas which fail to achieve their acceptance in the market place, namely the editorial columns of newspapers and magazines. And there is no valid argument against the fat clipping book. Certainly it is one measure of the success of the effort. The trouble is that it is frequently regarded as the only one.

### Testing PR Results

Because public relations is a subjective field, it is constantly being criticized for its inability to measure results. To this problem there is no immediate solution — certainly not in opinion polling even if this technique were not too expensive for most purposes. However, there is one more or less objective test which can be applied to most public relations work. If at the outset of the effort, clear objectives are set up, and the

organization takes the pains to set forth precisely what it wishes to accomplish, it can do so in terms which can be measured.

### Why Failures?

One of the most common reasons for failures in public relations work is the failure to approach public relations effort on the same basis as an organizational problem would be approached. If we accept the fact that through public relations techniques we are trying to accomplish something more than a fat clipping book, we should be able to spell out the program required to achieve our objectives systematically. Failure to reach objectives often arises from the failure to establish clear and specific objectives, to evaluate the possibilities for achieving them and to have them clearly in mind during the working out of the operating steps in the program.

For example, let us assume that a public utility company wants to increase its rates. There is a regular procedure for filing an application before public service commissions and presenting to them a case which justifies a rate increase. Nevertheless, it is recognized that public support makes it easier for the public service commission to grant the increase, provided a good economic case has been presented.

Even though a backlog of goodwill is invaluable when a company makes such an effort to increase rates, the straight goodwill concept of public relations would hardly get the rate increase. Obviously, there are many groups who do not want higher utility rates irrespective of how well they may regard the utility company. If possible, they should be preconditioned. But the risk of offending such groups must be calculated and taken if the rate increase is to be achieved. The public relations problem becomes one of presenting to the public

an economic case designed to satisfy the largest number of people and the largest number of significant groups. It probably can be stated best in terms of simple fairness. Now, here is the place where quality and quantity must be considered.

### Quality Determining Factor

A public utility company interested in a rate increase can get all the publicity it wants in the newspapers. Within twenty-four hours everyone in the area who reads a newspaper or listens to the radio can be alerted to the need for the increase, and in fact, will be at the time the application is filed whether or not the company does anything about it. Accordingly, the element of quality enters into the picture in determining the arguments which will be most persuasive and stating them in the correct idiom. The appeal must be stated in terms that the average man will appreciate. Merely stating that costs have risen, that employees must be paid more or that profits are jeopardized is not enough. The opposition must be anticipated and a program worked out to meet it every step of the way.

Quality in public relations is not only more difficult to measure, it is infinitely more difficult to achieve. Experience in handling similar situations helps, but each new problem must be approached differently and fully analyzed in terms of specific objectives. The use of public relations in labor disputes is a particularly good example of the qualitative approach.

Recently, for example, there was a complex labor dispute in the New York brewing industry. The dispute involved a wildcat strike by brewery employees who refused to work under a contract clause which set performance standards. If the standards were not met, employees were to be subject to penalties. On the

face of it, this is an exceedingly complex idea to explain to the public. Nevertheless, after the strike had been on for a few days, the brewing industry told its story to the public in the form of full page advertisements in all New York City newspapers. As far as could be determined, since the strike continued for several weeks and seemed to gain in strength and momentum, the advertisements had no measurable effect on either public opinion or the strike. If public opinion were affected, it certainly had no influence on the strikers. In fact, even many brewers concluded later that telling the story to the public was largely a waste of money. The public could not understand the issues, the striking group was able to assert that the strike was against speed up, that the contract had never been authorized by the membership, etc. The whole issue was thus drowned in confusion.

To a critic of public relations methods, the advertisements of the brewers and the public statements which they issued were unrealistic. The public relations effort did not take into consideration the complex nature of the strike, the fact that beer is a working man's drink sold in taverns — which are really working men's clubs — or that it was appealing to a community which is not ably labor minded.

### No Conventional Pattern

Obviously what may be reasonable behavior for one company in one situation is not reasonable behavior for another company in another field in a situation which is not quite comparable. A brewery no matter how large cannot behave like a steel company. Following a conventional pattern of employer conduct made no sense, public relations-wise, for the brewers. Certainly, no public relations effort can be successful unless the audience is kept clearly in mind.

Whom are we trying to convince? Is the general public a critical element in the success of the effort? Sometimes it is not. Should we, when it isn't necessary, try to convince people against what judgment tells us seems to be their economic interest or political predilection? Should we try to get the public excited about an issue when no matter how excited it gets, it is not likely to have much effect upon the outcome?

### Weigh the Case

In only rare cases in small communities and special industries is the public able to exert direct pressure in labor disputes. An appeal to the public frequently means the delay of the settlement and apparent determination to fight to the last ditch. On the other hand, there may be good reason to appeal to the public if the purpose is to maintain public pressure to achieve quick mediation by government or other public authorities.

Examples of the relationship of quality and quantity in public relations can be spun out endlessly and in terms which every businessman or newspaper reader will readily recognize. For example, it is well known that whatever is said by the top executives of such leading companies as General Motors, General Electric, United States Steel, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and others is immediately news on almost whatever subject they care to be quoted. They have no trouble telling their story. Their problem is solely one of getting their point of view across for their own benefit. Quantity in their case, means nothing, quality is all important.

In the early fall of 1948, the president of the Ford Motor Company, in the course of a speech which he made in Philadelphia, said that in his opinion, a fourth-round wage increase was inevitable. Critics of public relations and of corporate policy carefully considered this statement. Up to the time Mr. Ford

made it, there was surprisingly little reference to fourth-round increases even by the nation's labor leaders. Within a few days after the statement had been made, the AFL and CIO conventions were held and the cry for the fourth-round increase echoed throughout the land. Now it may be that Mr. Ford was acting in the tradition of his grandfather, or it may be that believing a fourth-round inevitable, he decided that, if it were going to come, he might as well get credit for it with his own employees and all the working people who purchase automobiles. But within a few days after Mr. Ford made his speech, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced a one-half per cent reduction in the consumers price index. There are those who feel that Mr. Ford, who did not have to pick this issue as a basis for publicity about his company, compromised his bargaining position and that of all American industry by his statement on the fourth-round wage increase. There are those who feel that Mr. Ford should have used the unquestioned public interest in what he had to say as a basis for bolstering the forces that are fighting inflation. Public relations is no exact science. Its "goodness" or "badness" depends on one's point of view. And in this case, only the Ford organization knows whether or not its objectives were achieved.

### Investment Banking

Another example, a classic one, where quantity does not constitute quality, is the case of investment banking and of Wall Street in general. Probably no other American institution except athletics receives so much newspaper space. Yet, despite the fact that Wall Street is thoroughly treated in newspapers every day, there is a startling lack of knowledge among the general public of the role of investment banking and stock

(Please Turn to Page 16)

# COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINE

By THOMAS L. COTTON

Public Relations Consultant, New York City

THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE that community relations, which has been called the keystone of public relations, must be based on the discipline of social science. This is not strange because the experience of the race in the development of constructive human relationships is synthesized in the literature of the social sciences. The philosophy, methods, skills, insights and techniques found in this body of knowledge must be employed if we are to find long range solutions to our public relations problems.

Much of the lack of enthusiastic acceptance of business institutions by some people in the community stems from the gulf which is fixed between the businessman's thinking and that of those who work primarily for so called social betterment in the community. To bridge this gap the businessman must become familiar with the philosophy on which these community betterment people operate.

Business management is a discipline for getting things done efficiently. It is a philosophy highly productive of goods, services and some human satisfactions. Nevertheless, it is a put-it-across philosophy leaving much to be desired in the production and dissemination of social concepts. The social scientist in the field of community organization work uses a philosophy of participation, and moves forward toward his goals with the cooperation of all in the community who have a stake in those goals. It is the insight developed through the skills used to get full par-

ticipation which makes the social scientist an effective salesman of ideas.

The businessman is convinced that the American system of competitive enterprise will fulfill the promises of individual dignity, opportunity, and human welfare, implicit in our national heritage, better than any other system. He has not been able to convince the whole community that this is true because he has not always used to the fullest extent possible the science of constructive human relationships to make his case. For one thing, he has used mostly the mass media of communication and neglected face to face communication, the medium through which the skills of participation and the resulting insights may be employed successfully.

There is definitely a process of community organization. The process is built on the philosophy of participation. Out of this philosophy have been hammered certain principles of work to be followed by the community organizer or community relations expert.

There is a great need for research in the field of community relations so that we may learn better how to apply those principles to the solving of our problems. We should have a look at the present community relations programs carried on by various industries and business institutions in this country to learn whether or not the principles of community organization are being applied and with what success.

An exciting experiment in the application of social science principles to public relations problems is going for-

ward at the Bowery Savings Bank on the Lower East Side of New York City. Although the project has been in operation for less than a year, some interesting results can be identified.

### The Neighborhood

The Lower East Side of New York City is usually considered a blighted area. The Grand Street Branch of the Bowery Savings Bank stands where the bank was founded in 1834. The headquarters of the bank has been moved to newer facilities on 42nd Street. The building on the original site, built in 1894 splendor, has recently been refurbished and the old board room arranged as a community club facility.

Encircling the bank for many blocks is ramshackle housing, although at the fringe eight or ten blocks away, the fore-runners of a number of rehousing projects are completed or in the process of construction. The Third Avenue Elevated roars past the windows of the club room on the second floor.

There are fifteen settlement houses active in the area. The headquarters of the Police Athletic League and the Boys Club organization are located nearby. There are churches, missions, flop houses and some park facilities dotting the area. Chinatown is a few blocks away, adding character to a population of many other racial strains.

For twenty-five years the Bowery Savings Bank has served more than twenty public schools with a school savings program. When the present project started there were 23 schools with 17,000 savers participating in that program.

In such a run-down community, the bank has quite naturally begun to suffer. Net loss in savings accounts, contrary to the trend in other communities, gave much concern to this bank's officers. Here was a malady needing a strong prescription.

President Henry Bruere gave me his diagnosis of the bank's position when he brought me in as consultant on community relations in 1948. He was convinced that no study or survey was necessary. The community was obviously run-down and no institution could for long be much better than the area it served. A broad, long range community betterment program was necessary if the debilitating trend were to be reversed. The \$64 question was, therefore, "How can a mutual savings bank bring about successful community betterment?"

My answer was a double barreled program. To develop young community leaders we would build a Junior Advisory Board and to enlist adult groups we would build two-way cooperative relationships with civic, recreational, social welfare and protective organizations in the area. No immediate results were promised. Most community betterment problems require a long range attack.

Because of the long experience of this bank with a school savings program, we decided to start with the Junior Advisory Board idea. This required the identification of junior high school pupils of good leadership qualities in the area and their training as loyal advisors to the bank program of community betterment.

### The Staff Committee

To help in the preparation of a training program, the bank gave the consultant a committee made up of the chief executive officer of the branch, the assistant treasurer, the school savings supervisor, a man from the advertising and promotion department and a young lady staff assistant. It was named the Staff Committee and it carries the responsibility for making the entire project a success. The consultant presents to it his plan for what is now known as the Junior Advisory Board of the Bowery Savings Bank.



The Staff Committee had much to criticize about my plan. They contributed many good ideas. In the end, we had hammered out a program in which we all had confidence.

This plan we took to the school officials, the head workers in settlement houses and others in various betterment agencies. Without exception, these people were interested and gave us suggestions which we used to strengthen our program. They also offered cooperation, thus convincing us that we would have the approval of the community in such a program.

Initiation of this program involved several problems; namely, the identification of young leaders, getting them into the bank and detailed programing of sessions which would keep them coming back until we could be sure that the juniors knew enough to be loyal advisors to the bank on community activities.

The thinking which went into the detailed planning of the sessions, the reasons for choosing six sessions, and how the theme was worked out would require much more space than is available in this article. It is perhaps sufficient to say that we stuck to the basic principles of group organization work.

### Recruiting

Identification of potential young leaders was easy. The principals and teachers we had visited did it for us in splendid fashion. A neighboring junior high school principal sends us, on request, a list of 35 pupils of high leadership qualities with their home addresses. The president of the bank then mails each child a personal invitation to become a Junior Advisor to the bank. He urges the pupil to attend six briefing sessions at the bank to be held on Wednesday and Friday afternoons at 3:30 for the next three weeks.

This invitation is accepted by the young people with much curiosity but after one or two sessions they become enthusiastic. We have had groups from four different schools, one after the other, and the regular attendance has averaged about 75 per cent of those invited.

### Training Program

The general theme of the sessions is "Individual Security Through Community Leadership." This is broken down into six sub-themes, one for each session. On Wednesday a vice president of the bank leads a discussion detailing the types of accounts one may have in the bank, the services it renders and what becomes of the depositors' money when it is put to work by the bank. On Fridays the bank is open until 6:30 P.M. and the Juniors are taken to the banking floor to interview tellers, operate various machines and study the vaults and safety devices.

A typical session opens at 3:30 with refreshments. The theme is then stated and explained. Next a film which nails down the sub-theme for the day is screened and discussed. This is followed by a discussion of bank operations or a visit to the banking floor, depending on the day of the week. At the close of each session a comic or a cartoon film is screened, the theme reviewed and the children leave at 5:30. Some of these films and their themes are: *Your Thrift Habits*, regular savings; *By Jupiter*, a film showing how to be a leader; and *Make Way for Youth*, in which the theme is doing things for your community.

The film forum leader gets most everybody in the group to participate in the discussion of the films. Sometimes a Junior will lead the discussion, thus having a chance to learn the skill of getting all around participation. This



develops Juniors as leaders and gives them a little insight into group dynamics. They get this also through work on committees which are appointed to help expedite the sessions.

At the sixth and last session of each school group a continuation committee of a dozen is elected. The members of the continuation committee are our real Junior Advisory Board. They meet once a month to work on bank-community problems. They decide who shall wear a Bowery School Savers' button, what changes will be made in the program of the future briefing sessions and how to keep the Junior Advisors employed on thrift education in the community.

By the end of the school year, the bank will have briefed 175 Juniors of high quality and half that number will have been selected for the continuation committee. From this beginning, the progress toward a broad community relations program is limited only by the participation which can be secured from the employees of the bank to supervise the activities of the Juniors. So intelligent, attractive and enthusiastic are the Juniors, it should not be difficult to get effective staff participation as time goes on.

#### Program Lauded

The District Superintendents of the schools from which the Juniors have been invited are greatly impressed with the program so far. One said the other day, "This is good teaching, excellent planning and sound programing." Another said that he wouldn't have believed it possible for a savings bank to make such an impact as the program had on one of his schools. He spoke of the first school which devoted an assembly period to a discussion of our program led by the Junior Advisors who described their experience at the

bank. Other schools are following this practice.

The high value placed on this project by school officials is echoed by the social, civic and recreational agencies in the community. The press is also interested. Although we have issued no releases, three metropolitan dailies have given the project some coverage. One three-quarter column in the *New York Herald Tribune* was headed by a four-column picture of the Junior Advisors in action. Reporters from *Printers' Ink*, *Modern Industry*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company* and N.A.M.'s *Exchange* are a few who have called for information.

#### Vehicle of Approach

When a corporation or an institution of any kind decides to establish a community relations program it must find a promising vehicle of approach. If the discipline of social science is employed the vehicle chosen is not the determining factor in the success of the program. It may be a community forum, an organized community-wide recreational program or it may be a Junior Advisory Board. When you deal with youth you steal the headlines and you develop leaders who can help spark any sort of public relations campaign you may decide to promote in the future.

Judging from an item in N.A.M.'s *Community Relations Exchange*, the National Cash Register Company in Dayton, Ohio seems to have found a good vehicle for getting into the hearts of the mothers in that community. The company runs a Saturday morning kids' quiz show with prizes. This takes the children off the hands of the mothers for a few hours but implicit in the activity is also the opportunity to show these children that a corporation can be a friendly citizen in the community, to

mention one of the many important lessons.

In every aspect of the Bowery project we tried to apply social science and pedagogical principles. *The community is always in command of its own destiny. It wants to be consulted and resents paternalistic gestures for its betterment.* This is the first and most basic social science principle of the community organization process. Therefore, one of our first steps was to develop a tentative program plan so that we could consult the community about something pretty definite.

### Any New Suggestions?

*Communities, like individuals, are all different. The program must be adaptable.* This is the second principle in the process of community organization. Following this principle, we invited many of the leadres, whom we had consulted earlier, into the bank for lunch as the program progressed. This gave us opportunity to report progress and adapt our program to new suggestions.

*Face to face communication must be employed in the community organization process.* This is the third principle and in our conferences with community leaders as well as in our work with Juniors we insisted on ample opportunities for discussion and back-talk.

*Try to advance goals in which the whole community has a stake. Let others grind your axe for you.* This fourth principle we nailed down by choosing as our general over all theme, "Individual Security Through Community Leadership." This theme made it obvious that we were interested in developing individuals who would try to build their own security and not lean on the government but cooperate with it by taking their part in community betterment activities. If we could do this for youth, we knew that we could produce a Junior Advisory

Board loyal to the bank and a force for community betterment. Such a board could, if properly informed, grind the bank's axe better than any bank official.

*The community relations expert should always be on tap, rarely on top.* To this principle the consultant stuck religiously. A team selected from members of the Staff Committee plus an expert film forum leader brought in from the outside had to execute the program. The consultant coached the team and kept himself on tap to guide the entire project. When you plant an idea and days later the team brings it back to you as its own, you know that as an expert you are on tap and not on top.

### Genuine Interest

*Make friends by being a hard working friend for good causes in the community.* To apply this principle and advance the second part of our program, good organizations in the community were invited to use the bank as a meeting place. When the District Committees of the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts accepted our invitation we saw to it that an officer of the bank was present to identify it as closely as possible with these organizations and make them feel that the bank was genuinely interested in them.

There are many community relations projects developing in America. They should be fully reported in *The Public Relations Journal* so that they may be discussed and evaluated for the good of the profession. As an aid to such evaluation and as a stimulant to more experimentation, a list of social science and reference literature is to be found below.

### Reference Literature

1. *Objectives of Group Work* by Clara Kaiser.
2. *The Social Worker in Group Work* by Margarette A. Williamson.

3. *Case Studies in Community Organization* by Walter W. Petit.
4. *Social Work Year Book 1948* (Eleventh annual issue, Russell Sage Foundation). Russell H. Kurtz, Editor. Many articles on group work and community organization.
5. *Building a Popular Movement: A Case Study of the Public Relations of the Boy Scouts of America* by Harold P. Levy.
6. *Social Work and Public Relations Pioneering* by Thomas L. Cotton, 1945-46 Public Relations Directory and Yearbook.

### Periodicals

*Bibliography of Current Literature in the Field of Community Organization*, published quarterly by Association for the Study of Community Organization, 311 South Juniper Street, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

*The Survey*, 112 East 19th Street, New York, N. Y.

*Channels*, organ of National Publicity Council, 130 East 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

*Annual Proceedings*, National Conference of Social Work. Columbia University Press.

THOMAS LUCIUS COTTON is the proprietor of the public relations agency which bears his name. He is a charter member of the Public Relations Society of America and one of the founding members of the American Association of Social Workers, the professional society in that field. A graduate of Dartmouth College (1917), he pursued graduate studies at Columbia University.

## Observations on Quantity and Quality

(Continued from Page 10)

market trading. This writer has never seen any consistent effort by investment bankers to explain their functions. No adequate explanation of the role of equity or risk capital in terms the average man can understand has been offered.

There is a sympathetic case for investment banking, but there has been little effort to state it. It is, after all, one of the major methods by which funds are made available for a vast increase in productive effort. There are notable examples of investment bankers who have served the public as well as industry in a socially desirable manner (through their primary work, not their philanthropies or civic activities) but this part of the story has not yet been told.

There are still other cases, where great quantities of publicity can actually be damaging. Let us examine the posi-

tion of the East Coast shipping industry. In the fall of 1948 it negotiated a contract in good faith with the longshoremen. The rank and file of the longshoremen, voting in the local unions, rejected the contract and struck for higher wages, apparently out of control of the union leadership. Regardless of the many emergencies for which dock labor was needed, the delay in shipments to Europe, etc., the shipping industry did not have a position from which it could appeal to anyone for sympathy and support. The government officials although conscientious in their efforts to settle the strike, felt that the shipping industry came into court with unclean hands.

Several days before the strike and apparently on its own initiative, the *New York Sun* had begun publication of a courageous series of articles dealing with rackets on the New York waterfront

where the principal tie-up occurred. The *Sun* listed innumerable racketeers and gave a clear impression that these racketeers were operating without effective opposition from management or union officials. The *Sun* painted a picture of the dock workers victimized by racketeers whose presence on the docks was ignored by management and labor leadership and gave the further impression that management condoned these racketeers because they somehow upheld the hand of those labor leaders with whom the employers found it easy to deal.

### An Explanation

After the very damaging strike had run its course, the *New York Sun* printed an unusual interview with the district attorney of New York County in which that public official said that the root of the evils of the docks was the existence of a "shake-up" system whereby men stand in line and are arbitrarily picked for employment each day. He said, "It is responsible for kick backs, loan sharking, and a large percentage of the other crimes on the waterfront." The power over employment is so arbitrary that these conditions necessarily follow. He added, "The shape-up is the root of the evil. I think it is a system which spawns criminal activities so regularly that the state legislature might reasonably abolish it. Seemingly, for their own selfish interests, the shipping association and the ILA (International Longshoremen Association, AFL) are not willing to do anything. But if either the union or the employers had any decent regard for the worker, they would equally agree that it is in his interest to abolish it. Evidently, neither the employer or the union has been stirred by a humanitarian impulse. In such a situation, the people and the legislature should take immediate action."

An obvious weakness in the moral and

therefore public position of a company or group of companies will inevitably have an adverse effect on the chances for achieving success. Consequently, sound public relations judgment, having in mind the given objectives that are sought, will try to eliminate ahead of time those obstacles which stand in the way of success. Thus the continuous existence of racketeering and criminality, the heartless disregard for human values in the waterfront hiring system makes it difficult for the shipping companies to win public support even in those situations where they may have a justifiable case.

The temptation to present public relations purely as a field of applied morality is great and it has had a great influence on the writing done about public relations. Many students of the field, however, feel that they are on more solid ground when they suggest that morality is not only desirable for its sake alone, but that a sound moral position is a great value as a basis from which to project ideas which are primarily in the field of economics and politics. Qualitatively, it must be recognized that the case is weakened by an inferior moral position and the best reason furnished for having a sound moral position is that it does strengthen the case. Morality is not its own reward but morality does encourage rewards. This is as it should be.

### Function of PR

On the other hand, the writer does not wish to give a wrong impression of what he considers the function of modern public relations. In most cases it is used to achieve specific objectives and most of these objectives are economic. One does not fail to adopt a program valuable to the economic health of a company or institution because it is going to run into opposition. Instead

the opposition is calculated and a course of conduct followed which will soften the opposition.

Corporate executives traditionally buy ideas. They seek to find the basic reasoning and logic in a proposition. There is evidence that editors and the general public react in the same way.

### PR Effort Self-Serving

All public relations effort is essentially self-serving. The competition of ideas is not unlike the competition in the sale of goods. Some chances have to be taken and sometimes public relations is used to oppose someone else's ideas or power as well as project one's own ideas and power. Thus we have simultaneous public relations campaigns by landlords to raise rents, by consumers to maintain rents at their present level. A company having a large share of the market may be vigorous in its program to get a larger share of the market while a second company may be seeking business by directly calling attention to the threat of monopoly which exists in the industry. Each takes a self-serving position and each carries on an aggressive public relations program to achieve its own objectives.

Major economic forces will be controlling, to a large extent, but these economic forces can be influenced by the ideas which companies and institutions project about themselves and about each other. Which company will succeed in identifying the audience's interest with its own? Which company will be able to make the best case on the good that will come from supporting it and the harm that will arise from supporting its competitors? Who will benefit from supporting a program? Clearly the key to success will lie in the ability to show that the public will benefit.

The yardsticks of quality and quantity can be applied to every aspect of public

relations. One company has a complete community relations program applying all of the approved techniques for building goodwill in its community, but is constantly in hot water. Why? Obviously there is something seriously lacking. Obviously the problem has not been adequately analyzed or the programs adequately executed.

Quantity in some cases does become quality. Even a not too satisfactory presentation in *Life*, simply because of that magazine's incredible circulation, may achieve the objective totally. If a company has a limited objective for example, the distribution of a new product, even one story in *Life* or the syndication of an article by the Associated Press might solve the problem.

But anything but the most favorable kind of treatment of its products would have little value or be actually damaging to the General Motors Corporation. One more favorable news story would probably have only marginal value to that company.

### Results Vary

A peculiar phenomenon of public relations work is that the effect of a small amount of favorable attention on some enterprise is overpowering while the effect of publicity on others is negligible. The answer to this question must be sought in an analysis of the company's operations and in the quality of the publicity material itself. For example, a reference in the columns of Walter Winchell to a new product manufactured by a chemical company has been known to result in dozens of inquiries from potentially large purchasers. Yet out and out "plugs" by Mr. Winchell on behalf of restaurants and night clubs have in some cases had no noticeable effect. Apparently when a certain type of publicity appears frequently, the law of diminishing returns begins to operate and restaurant

owners, who can and do get substantial publicity, must begin to find other ways to increase patronage while the industrial companies and their products which have not had popular recognition can perhaps benefit most from it.

Quantity becomes quality in other ways. Two years ago the nation's teachers put on an all-out drive for higher salaries and greater security. In this campaign many items appeared that were probably of dubious public relations significance. Here the success of the campaign derived as much as anything else from the absolute saturation of the American consciousness with the problem. The directors of this program recognized that it was a major national issue, that they needed overwhelming public support. Irrespective of the merits of their case, they felt they had to achieve a sense of urgency which could only be achieved through an overpowering effort in which, perhaps, the quality of appeal was sometimes submerged. Probably only a few incidents of the campaign are recalled by the average person. Yet there is a general impression that the teachers' case was completely told and that opposition, if any, was snowed under.

#### Despite As Good Case

Contrasting the successful program of the teachers with the effort of the nurses, it would be hard to deny that the nurses' case is as good as that of the teachers. There has certainly been no significant opposition to improving the economic status of nurses. But the nurses, despite their good case, have never received the quantity of attention which they must have in order to achieve their objectives. Thus, results in their case seems to be dependent largely upon quantity.

Quantity and quality are of great importance in the budgeting of public relations effort. Ordinary business judg-

ment suggests that it is wasteful to conduct a large scale campaign for the purpose of reaching an objective which might be achieved with a very small effort.

#### Not Enough Known

One of the weaknesses of the public relations field is that except on a basis of empirical knowledge and judgment not enough is known as yet to evaluate the type of effort required until after the effort has been made. Even before the presidential election of 1948, there were many public relations practitioners who doubted the value of public opinion polls as an aid to public relations programming. It is doubtful if many public relations programs have been changed in theory or detail as a result of knowledge gained from public opinion studies. Such polls do not adequately weigh the depth of feeling nor the potentialities for changing it. What is most important, they do not suggest a procedure. The decision on the public relations program must usually be a creative one, the judgment of leadership, the ingenuity of the practitioner.

Modern public relations operate in many areas. In some areas public feeling may be intense. In others quiescent. Many companies are deeply concerned with the question of monopoly and certainly this is a matter on which to fear government intervention. A public opinion poll would unquestionably show that a majority of the people dislike monopoly. Yet as a practical matter, there is evidence that the public, while generally interested in the subject of monopoly, is not aware of how it operates, knows and cares little about specific cases of monopoly and does nothing to punish, through its purchases or otherwise, a company which it may in principal feel is monopolistic.

This is the kind of issue which re-



quires a subtle public relations appraisal. Should this issue be fought out in the market place of public opinion by big companies or is this the kind of an issue which is better left alone?

Many companies today are carrying on elaborate programs of stockholder relations by publishing splendid annual reports. It is to be hoped that these reports are not thought of solely as a means of achieving shareholder interest and loyalty because all such programs may then require re-evaluation in the event of a decline in corporate profits and their distribution. A great public relations error lies in the failure of executives to appreciate the profound effect of their programs, policies and ideas as well as in what they say on the climate in which their company operates. Many of the slogans and clichés which work in advertising for the sale of merchandise do not carry over into the field of ideas. Ideas frequently need to be handled with low pressure instead of high pressure; they are subtle and must be handled with subtlety.

Some years ago there was published in France a book entitled *The Rape of the Masses* which, despite its title, was a serious treatment of the conditioned reflex as related to mass sentiment. There is no doubt that some public relations work can be tied to things in which the public is already conditioned. Thus the tightening conflict in the relations between Russia and the United States gives the cry of communism a powerful quality at this time. But this is an extreme case. The amount of conditioning that has taken place on most subjects is moot and public relations efforts must not make the mistake of overestimating it. The decision to rely on transferring attitudes from one subject to another is also unfortunately often based on one man's opinion of what the other man

thinks. This is frequently only a reflection of the first man's prejudice. This does not mean that in public relations practice, consideration should not be given to existing public attitudes. It would be foolish, for example, to use the precise arguments at all times with both agricultural and labor groups. Each, obviously, has special interests and points of view arising from such interests. But it is perhaps a slipshod practice to rely almost entirely on familiar patterns of thinking as a basis for getting the same attitudes transferred to new situations. Public relations practice properly should rely on psychological pre-conditioning, but the tendency to do this mechanically and to the exclusion of logic denotes a lazy approach to really difficult problems.

In the final analysis businessmen must recognize that in the practice of public relations they are dealing with ideas and that ideas must be presented qualitatively as well as quantitatively. While it is probably true, as many have said, that if you say a thing often enough people will believe it and that the maximum circulation of an idea can blot out opposition, still the opportunities for overwhelming circulation are so limited that business ought not to rely on such a theory. It is, however, extremely difficult for anyone to take a dispassionate view and know what exact quality is needed to achieve the objective. And unfortunately also, there is no scientific method for determining it. The best that probably can be hoped for is that continued study and specialization in the fields of communication and idea projection and opinion research, together with the conscientious use of logic in the handling of economic and sociological data, will gradually build up a body of experience upon which business can draw.



## PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Inc.

### OFFICERS — 1949

#### J. HANDLY WRIGHT, *Chairman of the Board*



**J.** HANDLY WRIGHT, assistant to the president and director of industrial and public relations of Monsanto Chemical Company, St. Louis, is a native of Nashville and was educated in law at Vanderbilt University.

After leaving college he served on the editorial staffs of the *Nashville Banner* and the *Nashville Tennessean*, as state and city editor of the *Tampa Times*, and as sports editor of the *Tampa Tribune*.

1926-1929 Mr. Wright was with Associated Press as reporter, wire editor and bureau chief in New York, Tampa, Tallahassee, Atlanta, Charlotte and Washington, D. C.

In 1929 he entered public relations as a staff member of Ames & Norr, New York, and in 1932 became a partner with Fred L. Palmer in the firm of Palmer and Wright. He sold his interest in 1935 to become assistant director of public relations of the National Association of Manufacturers.

Mr. Wright served as executive vice president of the Associated Industries of Alabama from 1939 until he joined Monsanto on December 1, 1943.

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#### AVERELL BROUGHTON, *President*

**A**VERELL BROUGHTON, public relations counsel, was born in Brooklyn, New York, studied at Rensselaer Polytechnic 1919-22, and received the A.B., 1923, A.M., 1924 from Columbia University where he was a graduate student and instructor in English and comparative literature 1923-27. He entered public relations and advertising in 1928, and has been owner of the Averell Broughton Agency, New York City, since 1937.

In World War I he served as First Lieutenant, Infantry, A.E.F., U. S. Army, and was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart.

Mr. Broughton is a member of the New York Public Relations Society, and served as chairman in 1948. He was a "founding father" and first eastern vice president of the Public Relations Society of America, Inc., and is a director of the American Museum of Health.

He is author of *Careers in Public Relations, The New Profession* (1943). Columnist: "Outside Looking In" since 1940, and contributor of numerous articles in trade and general publications.



**PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Inc.**  
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**NELSON W. ALDRICH, *Vice President (Western)***



**N**ELSON W. ALDRICH was born in Mount Pleasant, Utah in 1906. From 1928 to 1930 he served as chief clerk to the assistant traffic manager, Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad.

In 1931 he became affiliated with the Utah Copper Company as private secretary to the vice president and general manager; and since 1942 has been director of public relations, Utah Copper Division, Kennecott Copper Corporation.

Mr. Aldrich is a director and vice president of the Save Rite Drug Stores, Salt Lake City, Utah, Las Vegas, Nevada and Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is a past president of the Utah State Junior Chamber of Commerce, former vice president of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce. He is a director of the Business Men's Alliance, Salt Lake City, and a member of the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to being a vice president of the Society, Mr. Aldrich serves as General Chairman of the important Chapters Committee.

**MAXWELL E. BENSON, *Vice President (Southern)***

**M**AXWELL E. BENSON, public relations director, General Shoe Corporation, Nashville (since 1945) has been in public relations work and related fields since 1919 when, at the age of 17, he earned his way through high school by working on the editorial staff of the *Nashville Banner*. Later, age 20, while studying at Vanderbilt University, he was one of the country's youngest city editors: *The Tennessean*.

After a tour of duty on four southern and southwestern newspapers he settled down to a 15-year stretch in advertising-public relations for the Tennessee Electric Power Company.

Mr. Benson has been identified with civic activities for many years as a board member of Community Chest, Red Cross and similar community causes, with special interest in their public relations problems.

He is a member of Vanderbilt University's publications committee, and a co-author-publisher of *Fifty Years of Vanderbilt Football*. He is Regional Vice-Chairman of the Society's Chapters Committee.



## PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Inc.

## OFFICERS — 1949

**JOHN P. BRODERICK, *Vice President (Eastern)***

**J**OHN P. BRODERICK, vice president and a director of Doremus Company, advertising and public relations, New York City, was president of the New York Chapter of PRSA in 1948 and currently a Regional Vice Chairman of the Society's Chapters Committee.

Mr. Broderick is a graduate of the University of Minnesota and worked on newspapers and magazines in the Middle West until joining the staff of Dow, Jones & Company, New York City, in 1929. He was a reporter and one of the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* for several years until 1942 when he became publicity director for the Victory Fund Committee, Second Federal Reserve District, New York.

1939-40 he was president of the New York Financial Writers Association and, at the same time, president of the New York professional chapter of the journalistic fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi.

Mr. Broderick is president of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association of New York.

**WILLIAM R. HARSHE, *Vice President (Central)***

**W**ILLIAM R. HARSHE, public relations counsel, was born in Nantucket, Massachusetts in 1908. After graduating from the University of Chicago in 1930 he was employed on the *Chicago Herald-American*; and in that same year went into public relations work. In 1936 he organized his own public relations firm, William R. Harshe Associates, Inc. in Chicago.

He is a member and director of the Traveler's Aid Society of Chicago; a director of the Publicity Club of Chicago; and a member of the Chicago Athletic Association.

Mr. Harshe was chairman of the First Annual Conference of the Public Relations Society of America, held in Chicago November 17-18, 1948.

As Regional Vice Chairman of the Society's Chapters Committee Mr. Harshe is active in chapter development over a wide area.



## PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Inc.

## OFFICERS — 1949

LEE TRENHOLM, *Vice President (Canada)*

LEE TRENHOLM, public relations manager, Provincial Paper, Limited, Toronto, has been active in public relations in both Canada and the United States for the past twenty years.

He was educated in Virginia, saw ten years' city-room, wire-service, feature-syndicate and Congressional Press Gallery service in New York and Washington and for eight years had his own public relations office in New York City.

Since going to Canada in 1938 he has twice been president of the Advertising and Sales Club of Toronto and currently is president of the Canadian Circulations Audit Board, and executive vice president of the Association of Canadian Advertisers.

He was co-director of Canada's first academic course in public relations at the University of Toronto in early 1948.

RICHARD B. HALL, *Secretary*

RICHARD B. HALL was born in Hutchinson, Kansas. His early career embraced work on newspapers and his own publishing venture. His writing includes articles for the business press, editing trade group magazines and information services, and contribution to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Prominently identified with trade association work, Mr. Hall has held elective and honorary offices in numerous organizations and served as executive official of others, including the American Title Association and the American Society of Technical Appraisers. He has directed special activities for the Associated Leaders of Lumber and Fuel Dealers, the Mortgage Bankers Association of America, the Manufacturers Association of New Jersey, and others.

A resident of Washington, D. C., since 1933 — except for a four-year interval spent in developing a marketing and sales organization in Texas and the Southwestern States — he established his own office in Washington in 1940 as a public, industrial and government relations consultant.



## PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Inc. OFFICERS — 1949

### FREDERICK BOWES, JR., *Treasurer*



**F**REDERICK BOWES, JR. is manager of advertising and public relations, Pitney-Bowes, Inc.; a member of the Committee on Advertising of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Committee on Employee and Community Relations of the Association of National Advertisers.

Born in Philadelphia in 1908, he attended the public schools of Newton and Wellesley, Mass. and graduated from Dartmouth, 1930.

Immediately after college he started with Pitney-Bowes in its New York sales-service branch, first as stock clerk, later service mechanic, and was a salesman in Boston, 1931-33. He then served a year in London and Berlin with the company's British affiliate. 1934-37 he was Pitney-Bowes special representative in Wash., D. C.

In 1937 he joined Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn, Inc. as a plans board assistant and returned to Pitney-Bowes in 1939 as advertising manager.

During the war he was chief public relations officer of the WPB for New England and, later, regional manager of its War Production Drive.

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### SAMUEL D. FUSON, *Chairman of the Executive Committee*

**S**AMUEL D. FUSON is vice president in charge of public relations, Kudner Agency, New York.

Born in Seymour, Missouri, he attended Drury College, Springfield, Missouri, and joined the *Springfield Republican* as a reporter. From there he went to the Little Rock, Arkansas, *Gazette* as political reporter; the *St. Louis Republic* as columnist and later to the Associated Press staff in Columbus, Ohio. In World War I he enlisted in the U. S. Navy and rose to the rank of Ensign.

Following the war, Mr. Fuson joined the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, went to the Associated Press, then to the *Chicago Tribune*, and later served as managing editor of *The Christian Herald*.

He joined Erwin Wasey and Company, advertising agency, as public relations man, and became vice president and public relations director of Arthur Kudner, Inc. when that agency was formed in 1935.

During World War II he was in charge of public relations and advertising of the War Savings staff for New York and also served in advisory capacity on the national War Bond campaign.



# Book Review Section

CHACE CONLEY, Book Review Editor

## THE LAW OF FREE ENTERPRISE

Reviewed by Edward Brause, Public Relations Dept., Robbins & Barber, New York City.

**H**OT WORDS over "free enterprise" have been batted back and forth at ping-pong pace almost since the day early man took the first little pig to market.

Born in hushed talk behind closed doors, the argument burst into public debate with Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, rocketed through the Industrial Revolution and — in the U. S. A. — reached its most frenzied pitch while "that man" sat in the White House. With Harry S. Truman pledging a new "Fair Deal" program, more of the same can be expected.

Through all this argument there has been a lot of glib talk by both sides. Public relations men know it well. In many cases they wrote the script. In some cases they have written it for both sides — with equal ease. And, unfortunately, often with only a vague idea of what they were talking about!

As happens when any argument is carried on from generation to generation, the basic issues in this to-do about "free enterprise" have become obscured. Symbols and cliches have become entrenched in most minds to the point where few can dig them out. Digging them out becomes increasingly hard now that opposing beliefs have been branded with the somewhat terrifying title of "ideologies."

All of which is by way of saying that this new book, *The Law of Free Enterprise*, is well worth reading — particu-

larly by those public relations men who may be called upon to explain in a few well chosen words just what all the shouting is about.

*The Law of Free Enterprise* does exactly what it sets out to do, to "draw a map" for the layman who otherwise is apt to get lost in the maze of legal language which defines the American economic system. Drawing that map, it makes only passing references to the alternatives — economic anarchy or despotism — and expressly disavows any attempt to draw comparisons.

Author Lee Loevinger, now a Minneapolis lawyer, is an alumnus of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, class of Thurman Arnold. Barring late-in-the-book barbs for the lack of funds and manpower available to the Antitrust Division, his book, however, is presented as a dispassionate guide to help the average businessman "understand the basic laws of our economy and to work within them."

It translates legalistics into workaday language and interesting fact. Basically, Loevinger points out that our laws and court decisions do not prescribe what we must do, but rather what we must not do in the field of free enterprise. As he simply defines it: "The system of free enterprise is one in which anyone is free to earn his living in any lawful manner, to compete in any business field on equal terms with all competitors and to trade in a free market."

Legal boundaries, particularly in the field of monopoly, are explained as Loevinger draws his "map." He emphasizes as he goes along, however, that this ex-

isting "map" is subject to change. As he points out, "the law is the shadow of our morals, cast by the light of contemporary problems." And, later: "The considerations which judges most rarely mention, but which are always present and usually most important, are the considerations of what is expedient for the community."

That brings this book to its final and most interesting chapter — "The Future of Free Enterprise." In it, Loevinger asks and attempts to answer the ultimate questions building up in the reader's mind, how much economic freedom do we have, and what of the future?

For the first question he cites the indisputable figures which show that economic concentration is increasing substantially. But he also points out that this is not necessarily evil, that in a sense it is symptomatic of a general tendency toward concentration of populations. After conceding that the entrepreneur of today requires more capital and equipment, and faces more licensing restrictions, he winds up by declaring his belief that — all things considered — today's American businessman does enjoy "a very considerable amount of economic freedom."

What of the future? Loevinger stresses that the responsibility rests on ourselves. He warns that lack of confidence — in ourselves and our institutions — may lose us the very freedom we cherish. "The essence of freedom," he points out, "is the ability of a person to choose his own path, decide his own destiny."

He, for one, is confident, for he concludes with the prediction: "There is every reason to believe that the American people, with their genius for practical compromise, will continue to walk a middle path between economic lawlessness and tyranny." (THE LAW OF FREE ENTERPRISE, by Lee Loevinger. Funk & Wagnalls Co. 431 pp. — \$5.00.)

## THERE'S FREEDOM FOR THE BRAVE

Reviewed by K. S. Gisliger, Director of Public Relations, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York City.

IF PUBLIC RELATIONS techniques are to be applied to the problem of the preservation of that way of life we have come to regard as peculiarly American, this book by an Australian historian and political economist can serve as a useful touchstone. Paul McGuire's *There's Freedom for the Brave* is an approach to the central problem of our time based on the work of the nineteenth century political philosopher, Theodore Parker, and what Mr. McGuire chooses to call "the Natural Moral Law."

Subtitled his work "An Approach to World Order," Mr. McGuire deftly analyzes the social, moral, economic and political dilemma of the day in terms of moral values, with particular attention to the specific problems of the United States, Great Britain and the British Commonwealth, France, Russia and the Russian-dominated states. He then attempts to chart a course to be followed by each of us, as individuals and as members of society, to achieve world peace and world order.

The course Mr. McGuire would have us all follow can be summed up in ten major objectives for each individual, as follows:

1. To rededicate oneself to what Theodore Parker called "The American Idea," that is, "a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people" and "a government after the principles of eternal justice, the unchanging law of God."
2. To subordinate one's individual rights to those of humanity and to recognize in life more important objectives than power and prestige.
3. To fight racial, religious and national prejudice.
4. To resist all tendencies toward iso-



lationalism in the United States.

5. To work for tariff reduction and an open world economy.

6. To oppose government control of the economic process.

7. To resist government censorship of thought and morals.

8. To advocate military and political collaboration with other free nations.

9. To safeguard individual enterprise, while accepting its social responsibilities along with its privileges.

10. To champion the right of labor to a fair return and to demand that labor recognize its social responsibility.

It is easy to take issue with some of these points; impossible to do so with others. What is important about them is that they offer us a starting point for action and only by action can we save our society from chaos. The responsibility of saving society is one which those of us who are concerned with the communication of ideas must share with other groups which can be instrumental. If *There's Freedom for the Brave* can awaken us to this responsibility and open our thinking as to courses of action to be pursued, it will perform a great service. In the opinion of this reviewer, it is capable of that service and, consequently, deserves wide reading and, more important, wide discussion. (THERE'S FREEDOM FOR THE BRAVE, by Paul McGuire. William Morrow & Company. 309 pp. — \$4.00.)

## THE POLLSTERS

Reviewed by Robert LaBlonde, Vice President, Public Relations, Foote, Cone & Belding, New York City.

AS POLITICAL CLAIRVOYANTS, the public opinion polls have taken a beating since their "black Tuesday" of last November. They have been free game to everyone from radio comics to public opinion experts who for some years have questioned whether the polls serve the

public interest.

One of these astute experts, Lindsay Rogers, professor of public law at Columbia University, contends that the pollsters are more to be pitied than censured; they are more to be helped than despised; they are only people who ventured on opinion's cloudy path ill-advised.

In his book *The Pollsters*, Rogers establishes a well-documented opinion that if poll-takers "sold their product in bottles instead of as news, the Federal Trade Commission would long since have been after them."

His brief is not against the polls so much as against the boasts that the pollsters make — boasts that a number of persons answering yes or no or who confess ignorance or indifference when they are asked specific questions comprise public opinion.

To say that public opinion is being measured on a percentage of yeses and noes is to make milk masquerade as cream, according to Rogers, and such deception can be dangerous. We all agree that public opinion should rule. But the assumption of the pollsters is that what *they* claim *they* have discovered to be public opinion should rule. Rogers' criticism is not because the polling formulae do not give the whole story but because the pollsters maintain that it tells much more than it really does.

The professor builds his brief methodically, with assists from an imposing array of depositions ranging from Aristotle and Voltaire to Walter Lippman and Mr. Blandings who built his Dream House.

For instance, he cites James Russell Lowell who once compared public opinion with the pressure of the atmosphere, "you can't see it — but, all the same, it is sixteen pounds to the square inch." It is this force, "impalpable as the wind," which may be shifting, this pressure

"which cannot be seen" which Dr. Gallup tells us he can measure from the affirmative and negative replies that persons give when interviewers whom they have never seen before ask them questions they have not anticipated, on subjects that may not interest them.

Rogers presses his argument relentlessly and objectively to the conclusion that answers gathered by poll interviewers questioning 3,000 persons out of a population of 148,000,000 is NOT public opinion. His analyses and criticisms predate November 2, 1948, by many years. *The Pollsters* virtually was completed before election day, and was based on the assumption that the election results would be fairly close to the pollsters' predictions. Rogers' study goes far deeper than the recent fall from which the poll-takers long will be recovering.

The book drives home one poignant conclusion — that the polls do their greatest public service in exposing the areas of ignorance on pertinent questions of the day — areas where press, radio and other vehicles of communication to the public might spread more generous portions of enlightenment. (*THE POLLSTERS*, by *Lindsay Rogers*. Alfred A. Knopf. 239 pp. — \$2.75.)

## STALIN & CO.

Reviewed by Robert W. Marks, Author, *New York City*.

IN THESE DAYS of hysterical reporting, when correspondents and editors traffic in disproportions and in segments of explosive matter — frequently far removed from context — it is heartening to read the dispassionate writing of Walter Duranty. In this book, written without declared or apparent political bias, he presents the personalities of the men responsible for the political destinies of the Soviet Union, draws a tight picture of their backgrounds, and attempts to

account for their special orientations. Emphasis is placed on historical causes for the peculiar mold of Stalin's political philosophy and the configuration of events which determined his emotional toughness — the quality on which he prides himself and which, according to Duranty, he conceives to be the founding rock of successful revolutionary action.

Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kagonovich, Adreyev, Zhdanov, Mikoyan, Khrushchev, Malenkov, Beria, Voznesensky — each in turn is subjected to an incisive, analytical treatment. These bulwarks of the Politburo are considered comparatively in terms of temperament, capacity, and accomplishments, and in terms of influence on Soviet foreign and domestic policy. Considerable attention is given to comparisons of Soviet and American concepts of democracy and to their spokesmen's conflicting notions of the structural mechanics essential to a satisfactory people's government.

I am in no position to pass judgment on the correctness of Mr. Duranty's facts or interpretations. And it is certain that those who subscribe to the anti-Stalin faiths will cavil at many lines, particularly those that attribute the internal conflict within the Party to the resentment of the Stalin group, which endured years of imprisonment and hardships during the period preceding the Revolution, to the group of "Western Exiles," headed by Trotsky, Kamenov, and Zinoviev, who enjoyed during the interim the comparative safety of distance. *Stalin & Co.*, however, is significant reading to those divorced from internecine polemics and who would like factual, unemotional, reporting of a political hub around which half the world, today — for better or worse — is slowly revolving. (*STALIN & Co.*, by *Walter Duranty*. William Sloan Associates. 241 pp. — \$3.00.)

## *Welcome to New Members*

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Public Relations Society of America, Inc. held on March 9, 1949, the following individuals were unanimously elected to membership in the Society, following the required posting of their applications:



### ELECTED TO ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

**Babcock, Lorene W.**—Public Relations Director, Methodist Children's Home Society, Detroit, Michigan.

**Baker, William R.**—News Bureau Manager, General Foods Corporation, New York City.

**Belisle, Eugene Louis**—Vice President, Human Relations, Inc., Boston, Mass.

**Jolly, Fred R.**—Assistant Director of Community Relations, Caterpillar Tractor Company, East Peoria, Illinois.

**Persons, Hubert C.**—Manager, Public Relations Bureau, Portland Cement Association, Chicago, Illinois.

**Robinson, Claude E.**—President, Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, New Jersey.

**Sarasohn, Trudie**—Public Relations Director, Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies of Metropolitan Detroit.

**Wilder, Robert G.**—Owner, Robert G. Wilder & Company (public relations counsel), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



### ELECTED TO ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

**Fox, Maxwell C.**—Public Relations Director, Advertising Council, Inc., New York City.

**Lyons, Gerald**—Director of Publicity, Veterans Hospital Camp Shows, Inc., New York City.

**Warner, Edward L., Jr.**—Director of Public Relations, Detroit Office, McCann-Erickson, Inc., Detroit, Michigan.

# The Job Employee Publications Can Do — If Allowed To Do It

By J. K. BARNES, Jr.

Public Relations Dept., Lever Brothers Co., Cambridge, Mass.

THE FIELD of employee communications is a big one, but my remarks will be limited to employee publications, or internal house organs. Best estimates\* are that these publications — most in magazine form, some in newspaper format — total about 4,000 in the country. There are about another 2,000 of external, trade association and other type of house organs. From the viewpoint of money spent, the employee publication is by far the largest segment of the entire employee communications operation. With a circulation of perhaps 30 million primary readers, industry spends some \$70 million a year on them, including salaries.

I would say that about 40 million of this 70 million dollars is being almost entirely wasted. In hazarding this guess, I am not being unfaithful to my profession, because I do not believe that the editors of these publications are primarily responsible for this waste.

Let me quote a leading student and authority on employee publications, C. B. Larrabee, President and Publisher of *Printers' Ink*. In a recent (December 31, 1948) editorial in his magazine, he said:

"Often I am astounded to find how little use many companies make of one of their most effective tools for building better employee relations. That tool is the company magazine.

"I think management does appreciate

the need of these magazines but knowledge of a need is a long way from understanding how to make the best use of the tool that satisfies that need."

"And yet," Mr. Larrabee says, "I know of no other single method of reaching employees that has quite the acceptance that a good company magazine has.

"The tool is at hand. Management believes in its value, but again and again it does not understand how far short it falls of making full use of that tool."

Where these magazines fall short is in explaining and interpreting major company policies and programs. The majority of these publications today are still gossip-filled, chit-chat mediums designed primarily to entertain. This is not to say that such publications should not carry *any* personal news. However, the news should be personals — *news* about persons — not gossip. It should tell of something done of general interest. Marriages, deaths, babies, vacations and similar types of usual news are worth only a listing at most. But if some employee *does* something; if, in other words, it tests as news of general interest, it can be carried — preferably in feature form.

The reasons for this failure are lack of knowledge of what *can* be done, and lack of a policy and program based on such knowledge. The editor should not be held responsible for these weaknesses. They are problems for top management. The blame for ineffectiveness lies

This talk was presented at the New York Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America clinic on Employee Communications, February 7, 1949.

\* Figures based on survey by Research Committee of International Council of Industrial Editors.

with top management's unawareness of, or disinterest in, what can be done. Most public relations executives are aware of this. Many — as members of, or advisors to top management — can do something about it, and probably are doing something about it.

### Why Poor Editing

The second major reason for the lack of effectiveness is *poor editing*. This is due to two factors: low salaries and poor selection of editors. Until recently, salaries paid were not enough to attract competent editorial talent. Even today, salaries are too low. The recent survey by the International Council of Industrial Editors in the United States and Canada, showed that 25 per cent of all editors today receive less than \$3,600 a year, 67 per cent receive less than \$6,000, 13 per cent receive from \$6,000 to \$9,600, and only 2½ per cent of those reporting were in the \$10,000-and-up bracket.

Just as startling, the survey also revealed that nearly 40 per cent had no newspaper, publicity, public relations, or even advertising experience before being named to their jobs as editors.

Often, when it came time to pick an editor, management chose the man who looked the least busy or perhaps had expressed an interest in "writing." Or perhaps the publication was an off-shoot of the personnel department, with a girl in the office assigned to it. And yet these publications edited by these people are in competition with the best editorial brains in the country. Let me quote Mr. Larrabee again, since he is an acknowledged authority in the field.

I recently asked him about this question of competition, and he said: "Yes, I *do* think you are in competition with national magazines, just as you are in competition with radio, television, the church, and a sunny spring day. Your employees have only so much time and

they have to use it the way they want to use it." "And," he added, "I think a good house magazine has a bulge on any other type of printed literature going into the home because it deals very definitely with the employee's business life. This editor loses this bulge, however, if he does not do a good editorial job."

The third and last major reason, in my opinion, for the poor job being done is lack of authority once a *competent* editor has been chosen. He must have company acceptance at the top if he is to do a top-level job. He should know "policy" and how it is determined by sitting in on major policy discussions. He should have the complete trust of management, subject to the closest review before publication, and must not be looked upon as a reporter for an outside publication, as is sometimes the case. I fully realize the difficulties in the way of such an operation, but believe it essential.

Having outlined the dismal picture as I see it, perhaps I can offer something constructive as to what can be done about it.

### Planned Approach Necessary

Progress is being made. Important strides have been taken, particularly during the last two years, and primarily among some of the larger industrial concerns. Even so there are only a few dozen of these publications performing the job of which they are capable. Nobody is more aware of this than the editors of the publications themselves.

As in any field, a planned approach is necessary. I would suggest these four major points as basic to any plan:

- 1) Establish the **PURPOSE** of the publication in *writing* and secure written top management approval and cooperation with this purpose. (This seems too obvious to even mention, and yet it is remarkable the number of publications

that do not have a purpose, except in the editor's mind; or if written, it is not known and approved by top management; or if O. K.'d by them it is not passed down the line to supervision, at the levels where the editor must do most of his work.)

2) Establish the policy, the OBJECTIVES, and a regular scheduled approach to meet these objectives.

3) PACKAGE the publication interestingly, and colorfully if possible, and maintain close and consistent editorial control of direction and weight.

4) SURVEY your results regularly.

The approach to these goals will, of course, differ with each individual. All I can offer is my own ideas as to what should be done. First, as to PURPOSE. The general purpose of all such publications is to develop and improve the relations between the company and its employees. The reason behind the purpose — or the pay-off for this \$70 million expenditure — is that a friendly, cooperative employee is a more productive employee. He benefits both himself and the company.

### What To Do

A working platform to carry out this purpose might be expressed as follows:

"To tell each employee *what* we are doing in the company, *why* we are doing it, and *how* it will affect each one of them, and to tell them *first* — before they read about it elsewhere or hear it in garbled form through the rumor grapevine."

The company OBJECTIVES which can be built upon such a platform are these:

To INTEREST the employee in his job, in its importance and in doing it better.

To FOSTER loyalty to and pride in the company and its products.

To DEVELOP an urge to make working for the company a lifetime job.

To EDUCATE the employee in the benefits of the company, its progressiveness and its fairness in wages and working conditions.

To INFORM the employee of the problems of the company and how the employee can help solve them.

To PERSUADE employees of the company's interest in human values and acceptance of its social responsibilities.

To COUNTERACT the unrest sown by those who profit from misunderstanding.

And, finally, by extending the publication into the home, to develop the same attitudes on the part of the families of the employees.

### Employees' Desires

With these objectives established the approach to be made must be determined. It so happens that the desires of employees coincide almost entirely with the objectives of a company which has alert, progressive management. Obviously, I am assuming throughout that the policies of the company are enlightened and progressive. I don't have to tell you that good public relations comes from within — that, as in advertising, no editor can long continue to sell a shoddy product. However, where companies have such standards and such employee relations and don't talk about them, they are short-changing themselves. They are violating half of the principle of good public relations: Live Right — Then Tell About It.

Just what is it that the employee wants to know?

His own job and his future prospects are of the greatest importance to him.

He wants to be treated as a human being at all times.

He wants to know the possibilities of steady employment.

He wants to know where the company



stands in the industry and in the country.

He wants to know what is being done to insure his future job, so that he can gain a feeling of security in his job and relief from economic worry.

He dreads a feeling of futility and inferiority and wants a chance to get ahead. He also wants relief from the feeling that he could move faster elsewhere.

He wants to be proud of his company, its people, its products, and his job.

He wants to develop a goal within the company and to know where he is going.

Finally, and *not* most important, he wants fair wages and working conditions.

### What It Takes

Generally speaking, then, employees want to know that what they do daily is good and useful. If business does not tell them this story, nobody else is going to do the job for us.

The problem is to translate into specific editorial features this identity of interests between the company and the employees — to show that the company is in business as much for their benefit as for its own.

This takes continuity, balance, and editorial savvy of a high degree. It depends mainly on the editor himself who, as said before, has just as hard a job as does the editor of the general consumer magazine.

His audience is probably more expert in the field in which he is writing than is the general magazine's public. While he does have the advantage of dealing with one of his readers' major interests, this can be offset by the fact that the magazine is free, and from suspicion remaining from some past actions of business in general.

If the employee publication does not deal with its readers' business life, but

instead limits itself to chit-chat, it loses its natural advantage.

As to requirements for an editor, the basic one is a solid newspaper background. If this background is in business writing or if he has had public relations or editorial experience in business, this is an added advantage.

One of his full-time gods should be Rudolph Flesch, pioneer and advocate of simple writing, or readability.

He should be interested in and a student of industrial relations.

Training in economics is desirable, sociology and psychology second choices.

Finally, the editor should be promotion and sale-minded, since he must do a continuing selling job with both his readers and the management of the organization if he is to be successful.

Thus we have as the basic requirements a combination journalist-economist-salesman.

### Basic Need

Incidentally, I do not believe that an industrial relations background, alone, is enough. Neither do I believe that the editor should operate under the Industrial Relations or Personnel department. An employee publication is a public relations tool doing an industrial relations job, it is true. But the basic need is expertness in communication, which is the field of the public relations rather than the industrial relations man.

Other reasons are that the publication should be tied in very closely to the Public Relations department and that it should be separated from the department which handles the negotiating and rule enforcement operations of the company.

Now as to specific methods of operation:

I believe strongly in a news approach. I think this news should be kept in pro-

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# POSTINGS

**T**HE By-laws of the Society require that applications for membership be posted at least 30 days before they are submitted to the Board of Directors or to the Executive Committee for approval. Active members desiring to comment on the following applicants should write the Eligibility Committee, Public Relations Society of America, Inc., 525 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, New York.

## ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

**CUMMINGS, GLENN H.**—Proprietor, Glenn H. Cummings, Detroit, Michigan.  
*Sponsor:* Fred L. Black and William H. McGaughey.

**DEEGAN, THOMAS J., JR.**—Director of Public Relations, Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Co. and Federation for Railway Progress, New York City. *Sponsors:* Alleyn H. Beamish and L. Richard Guylay.

**FETHERSTON, THOMAS C.**—Assistant Manager, General Publicity Department, Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation, New York City. *Sponsors:* Russell Wilks and Averell Broughton.

**MacLAURY, BRUCE K.**—Director of Public Relations and Advertising, Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company, Inc., New York City. *Sponsors:* Dudley L. Parsons and John V. Tharrett.

**McGOLDRICK, JAMES L.**—Vice President, Fred Eldean Organization, New York City. *Sponsors:* Fred Eldean and Ralph W. Bugli.

**NILES, PHILIP B.**—Public Relations Director, Owens-Illinois Glass Company, Toledo, Ohio. *Sponsors:* Averell Broughton and J. Handly Wright.

**NORRIS, DWIGHT W.**—Manager, Public Relations, New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company, New York City. *Sponsors:* K. C. Pratt and Joseph L. Barrett.

**RENEGAR, HORACE CALVIN**—Director of Public Relations, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. *Sponsors:* E. D. Whittlesey and W. Emerson Reck.

**TREPAGNIER, WILLIAM J.**—Editor, Automobile Club of Michigan, Detroit, Michigan. *Sponsors:* Anthony G. De Lorenzo and Otis A. Crosby.

WILLIER, ROBERT A.—Partner, Robert A. Willier & Associates, St. Louis, Mo.  
*Sponsors:* J. Handly Wright and Sam D. Fuson.

WILSON, ROY K.—Assistant Director, Division of Press & Radio Relations, National Education Association, Washington, D. C. *Sponsors:* Rex F. Harlow and W. Emerson Reck.

WRIGHT, HUGH W.—Director of Public Relations, Armco Steel Corporation, Middletown, Ohio. *Sponsors:* Weston Smith and Richard B. Hall.

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

BAILEY, GERTRUDE E.—New York Representative, Industrial and Public Relations, Monsanto Chemical Company, New York City. *Sponsors:* J. Handly Wright and Thomas W. Parry.

BATEMAN, J. CARROLL—Public Relations Representative, The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Baltimore, Maryland. *Sponsors:* Lynn D. Poole and R. W. Darrow.

CHESTER, JOHN F.—Director of Public Relations, Carrier Corporation, Syracuse, New York. *Sponsors:* J. Handly Wright and W. Howard Chase.

HAUSER, M. S.—Manager, Public Relations Department, The Ohio Oil Company, Findlay, Ohio. *Sponsors:* Conger Reynolds and Fred Eldean.

KEITH, DAVID L.—President, David L. Keith & Co., Peoria, Illinois. *Sponsors:* Hazel R. Ferguson and Walter V. McAdoo.

McCAMMOND, DONALD B.—Assistant to Director, Industrial & Public Relations, in charge of Eastern Operations, Monsanto Chemical Company, Everett, Mass. *Sponsors:* J. Handly Wright and Thomas W. Parry.

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“One of the main points of misunderstanding is that too many of us confuse ‘public relations’ with a ‘public relations program’. Every company, our own included, has public relations whether we so desire or not.”

—From *The Management Magazine* of Yale & Towne Mfg. Company

## Job Employee Publications

(Continued from Page 34)

portion to the numbers of hourly, salaried, and supervisory workers. On this basis the boss gets in the publication only when he makes news.

Information should be carried when it is news, a short bite at a time, frequently, and from different angles and points of view.

### Press News

The editor should be an integral part of the Public Relations department. He should have a regular news beat with top officials. If the department is large enough to boast a press relations or news bureau operation, these men should be tied into the publication — either by turning over tips to the editor or by being assigned articles within their particular news beat.

Press news of employee relations can be released in the employee publication, and then serviced as usual, if desired. In such a case the publication would be quoted in the local press as the source, developing its value and authoritative-ness to employees. In the case of regional plant-city stories this could be a regular procedure.

The publication should make use of the various promotional methods used in the consumer field, with contests, pictures, cartoons, animated charts, and similar methods.

In order to secure and hold family readership it should carry a home page, preferably with contributions of recipes, household hints or such material from the wives of readers themselves.

It should cover news of the union when it is news.

But basically, I believe it should report the facts of business life. As an example, here are a few headlines which appeared in the Ford Motor Co. chain

of plant newspapers during 1948. This was a chain of 16 separate, eight-page tabloid size newspapers in as many plants, of which I was Supervising Editor.

These headlines will explain themselves:

"New Fords Shown to Employees," "In Advance of Public Showing," "Work Stoppages at Low," "Labor Turnover Cut by One Third," "Offer Contract Choices," "Charting the Course," "Employees Polled: and the Results," "Poll Critical of Company But Notes Improvements," "Ford Sets Goal — 'Beat Chevrolet'."

For other specific examples, let me refer to a current operation, the *Lever Standard*, monthly 40-page magazine for the employees of Lever Brothers Company, of which I am Editor.

### Feature Item

In a recent issue, we wanted to explain about the company Credit Union, which the company supports in a financial way, although it is run independently of the company. Instead of a straight story of how credit unions operate, we did a feature interview, with numerous pictures, of a man who had borrowed frequently from the Credit Union for a mortgage to purchase a home and then to renovate and repair it. We quoted his own, sincere words as to the value of the Credit Union and ended with less than a page describing the operations and growth of the Credit Unions at all of our plants during the year.

We found a widespread lack of knowledge of the benefits which the company provides employees at no expense to them. We then totalled up the dollar value of these benefits. We featured this in a quiz distributed to all employees.

The figure on cost of benefits to the company was guessed correctly by only seven per cent of employees. It was, incidentally, 39 cents per employee per hour.

### Series

We are following that up with a regular series, one story in each issue on the various benefits. So far we have covered our higher-than-average wages; our medical service; our free pension plan; how pensions tie in with Federal Social Security and savings for happy retirement. We will follow with stories on our group insurance plan, low-cost hospital and surgical insurance, sale of food in cafeterias at cost, and others.

All of these are dramatized with unusual layouts, pictures, art and color. We print such articles in the center section so they can be easily removed and saved, which we suggest be done.

In another issue, we discussed job security in a factual manner. We used figures showing the length of service of employees, the recent expansion of the company which provided 1,100 additional jobs in the last year alone, the lack of strikes and the low percentage of lay-offs even during the depression of the '30s.

On the family side, our November issue gave a tested recipe for cooking a turkey, with recipes for accompanying side dishes contributed by readers, and concluded with a picture story on the proper method of carving the bird.

With a new product introduced last month by our Pepsodent Division — the Rayve Home Permanent — we enlisted the support of employees in talking about and promoting it by offering them a free kit for their own use. We frankly sought to enlist them as salesmen and to provide them with information to use when questioned by their friends about the new Lever product.

We have also discussed in the past several issues the current Congressional fight to repeal taxes and other discriminatory legislation on margarine, of which we are a major producer, through our John F. Jelke Company subsidiary.

But neither we nor anybody else that I know of have yet gone far enough. Some publications are doing some of the following things, but I see no reason why employee publications could not introduce such news as this:

A regular feature on the company's production and efficiency.

A running feature on the industry and the company's competitive position in it, and the state of the business economy in general.

A regular message from the president, or other authoritative source, on the reasons behind every major change in work schedules.

Features on the plant cities, emphasizing the contribution of the company to the city's economy and the contributions in activities of individual employees in the city's life.

A concrete goal for the company and the employees to work towards.

### Local Slant

But all of this should be brought down to the local level, applying it to the individual or the individual plant, even if rewrites are necessary for dozens of separate plants.

For instance, let's suppose the coal pile in the back yard is larger than ordinary. Why not use that as a news peg to tee off on an article. It's something the reader can see and has perhaps wondered about — or will wonder about if you introduce the article properly. This leads naturally into a discussion of inventories, the effect of rising costs on them — and on profits; or perhaps into a discussion of the duties and importance of the purchasing department.

When wage changes are made, why not an explanation of the reasons behind them.

Any articles that explain what management does and why, or what any of the various departments do, will help explain their importance in contributing to keeping jobs secure for the production worker.

Finally, I would like to touch on economic education, about which you have heard so much and will continue to hear.

I believe many of the activities I have mentioned are economic education. Further than that, I believe they are education at the local level, tying it to the individual, where it will do the most good. By telling of something *done*, rather than something *said*, I believe we make education in economics more effective.

It is right at this point that the editor will stand or fall. He must be given authority — the right to edit. For it is essential that he control the material going in the publication to be sure it is factual.

### Good Editor Knows . . .

The good editor knows his approach must be from the standpoint of what the *employee* wants to know. This does not mean that the company objectives cannot be brought in — and strongly — but the “feel” of the publication must be from the employees’ viewpoint.

The good editor knows that his readers are interested in news about their jobs — economic information. But the problem is in presentation. It can be simplified, dressed up, illustrated and still may not go over.

This requires a new type of industrial journalism — the presentation of simplified, interesting information that wins employee’s respect and confidence. And an absolutely factual approach is necessary to gain and deserve this confidence.

It is only if the editor avoids the three

editorial sins — preaching, paternalism, and propaganda — that his publication will be looked upon without suspicion and will be read *and accepted*.

### Surveys

As to the final point in our four-point plan of operation — surveys — let me say just a few words. Surveys are one of the most useful checks and tools that any industrial editor can have, but business is not yet devoting anything of the time and money to a survey of its human relations as it is to its consumer or market relations.

My boss, Charles Luckman, President of Lever Brothers, puts it this way: “If we were to devote to basic industrial relations research just 10 per cent of the amount of money we appropriate annually for consumer research, we would not be such puzzled inhabitants of the cock-eyed world in which we live.”

Part of the value of such surveying is that properly done it tells us without question what the *employee* wants to know or what he *really* thinks about our policies and not what we *think* he wants to know or would *like to believe* he thinks.

Dr. F. J. Roethlisberger, Professor of Human Relations at Harvard Business School, says: “One simple genuine move on the part of management to understand employees from *their* point of view is worth ten moves on the part of management to get employees to understand the problems of management.”

One example from Lever Brothers experience will suffice here. Early last year the company decided it must answer questions in the minds of its employees about Lever’s advertising. During the war, there had been queries as to why we spent so much on advertising during quota-limited shipments.

The next question, which has been asked by many unions, was: “Why not

put some of this money into wages?" To answer these questions, and to explain the company's policy as one of the nation's leading advertisers, we decided on a booklet for employees which finally carried the title "What About Lever Advertising?"

### Ask the Employees

This booklet, which some of you may have seen, had a very fine reception both within the company and outside. But the important thing is how we went about preparing it. Instead of dreaming up the answers at a desk, we employed opinion research. We went to the people, talked to the workers, to the unions and to supervisors. Before we decided what to say, we found out what our people wanted to know. We got their questions — from plant managers to boiler men. In the booklet we used the cartoon strip technique and made an honest effort to answer those questions. The reception within the company was particularly good, since the way had been cleared and our people felt they had shared in its preparation.

This booklet did two things. First, it answered, simply, directly and clearly, the questions in the minds of our employees. Second, it taught an important lesson in basic economics, namely, that good advertising sells more products, increases wages, and raises the standard of living. And as a corollary, that companies which ceased advertising, even in times when they had limited goods to sell, have fallen by the wayside.

This is the kind of economic educa-

tion which I believe will be most effective. Our workers are looking for that kind of an explanation and that kind of leadership.

It is clearly up to management to manage — to provide them with that leadership.

American business is tops in selling its products. It still has far to go in selling the system that makes those products possible — and with them our high standard of living.

### Economic Facts

In conclusion, let me emphasize that workers are looking for an explanation that their daily work is good and useful.

Unfortunately, they haven't been told "what's in it for them." They are consequently suspicious of "free enterprise," or to use a less abused term, of the competitive business system.

It is the job of the industrial editor to tell them where they fit in, where they benefit — and where they can lose under other systems.

This must be done by the direct, personal application of simple economic facts. The worker must be related to his job, his job to the company and the industry, and all of it to the general economy.

The three editorial vices — preaching, paternalism and propaganda — must be avoided. The story must be told simply . . . directly . . . calmly . . . and everlastingly.

I submit that the employee publication is the place to start saving free enterprise.

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"Resolve that you will help America by actively opposing anything you read, see or hear that is contrary to the best interests of your country. If you hear a vicious rumor about a person, group or organization, don't believe it and don't repeat it. If possible, try to prevent its further propagation."

—ALBERT CARRIERE (*Printers' Ink*, January 14, 1949)

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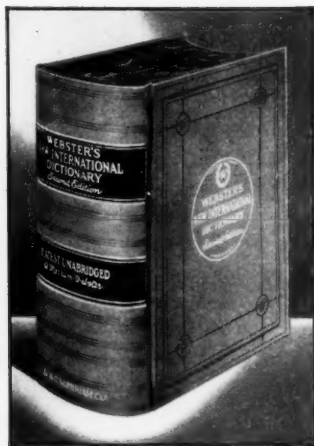
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# "Public Relations"

**pub'lic re-la'tions.** (pub'lik re-la'shuns) **1.** The activities of an industry, union, corporation, profession, government, or other organization in building and maintaining sound and productive relations with special publics such as customers, employees, or stockholders, and with the public at large, so as to adapt itself to its environment and interpret itself to society. **2.** The state of such activities, or the degree of their success, in furthering public understanding of an organization's economic and social adjustment; as, good or poor *public relations*. **3.** The art or profession of organizing and developing these activities; as, university courses in *public relations*; *public relations* requires technical skill in various techniques. Hence, *public relations officer, director, counsel, or consultant*.

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